

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Economy of the Earth, Second Edition

Mark Sagoff draws on the last twenty years of debate over the foundations of environmentalism in this comprehensive revision of *The Economy of the Earth*. Posing questions pertinent to consumption, cost-benefit analysis, the normative implications of neo-Darwinism, the role of natural history, and the centrality of the concept of place in environmental ethics, he analyzes social policy in relation to the environment, pollution, the workplace, and public safety and health. Sagoff distinguishes ethical from economic questions and explains which kinds of concepts, arguments, and processes are appropriate to each. He offers a critique of “preference” and “willingness to pay” as measures of value in environmental economics and defends political, cultural, aesthetic, and ethical reasons to protect the natural environment.

Mark Sagoff directs and is a Senior Research Scholar at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. The author of *Price, Principle and the Environment* (2004), he has published widely in journals of law, philosophy, and the environment. Dr. Sagoff was named a Pew Scholar in Conservation and the Environment in 1991 and was a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in 1998. He is also a Fellow of the Hastings Center and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Economy of the Earth
Philosophy, Law, and the Environment
Second Edition

MARK SAGOFF

Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy
University of Maryland



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521867559

© Mark Sagoff 1988, 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1988

Second edition first published 2008

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Sagoff, Mark.

The Economy of the earth : philosophy, law, and the environment /

Mark Sagoff. – 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-86755-9 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-68713-3 (pbk.)

1. Environmental policy – United States. 2. United States – Economic policy.

3. United States – Social policy. 4. Environmental law – United States.

5. Social legislation – United States. I. Title.

HC110.E5S34 2008

363.7'0560973–dc22 2007013207

ISBN 978-0-521-86755-9 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-68713-3 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*For my father
who gave me my first copy of Thoreau's Walden*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page ix</i>
1 Introduction	1
2 At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima <i>or</i> Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic	24
3 The Allocation and Distribution of Resources	46
4 Values and Preferences	67
5 Can We Put a Price on Nature's Services?	87
6 Do We Consume Too Much?	110
7 Is an Environmental Ethic Compatible with Biological Science?	137
8 Settling America <i>or</i> the Concept of Place in Environmental Ethics	157
9 Natural and National History	175
10 Environmentalism: Death and Resurrection	194
<i>Notes</i>	209
<i>Index</i>	259

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

The second edition of this book represents a total overhaul and complete revision of the first. Only Chapters 2, 3, and 8 bear any resemblance to text found in the earlier edition; the other chapters were written in recent years. Although this is essentially a new book, many of the acknowledgments remain the same. I wrote the second edition as I did the first while at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. There is little in this essay that did not arise out of discussion with my colleagues at the Institute and the School, or from some thought suggested by their work, or in response to their sympathetic criticism, or to the ideas they offered me. No research center other than the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, as far as I know, provides a similar opportunity for philosophers to pursue politically informed conceptual analysis on a sustained basis. Each page of this book acknowledges implicitly, as I do explicitly here, the help I received from my colleagues at the Institute over the years – editors Claudia Mills, Arthur Evenchik, and Verna Gehring and researchers (past and present) David Crocker, Robert Fullinwider, William Galston, Peter Levine, Xiaorong Li, Judith Lichtenberg, David Luban, Douglas MacLean, Henry Shue, Robert Wachbroit, and David Wasserman. I am particularly grateful to two colleagues at the School of Public Policy, with offices neighboring mine on the same floor, Robert H. Nelson and Herman E. Daly, for their patience, kindness, and direction. Bob Nelson labored over an earlier draft to alert me to many errors I would have otherwise committed, and he suggested many arguments I could not have otherwise made. I should also like to thank the Institute administrator, Carroll Linkins, and our graduate assistant, Jillien Dube, who dealt cheerfully and patiently with the secretarial problems I created in writing and revising this manuscript.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

I am deeply grateful to good friends outside the Institute, especially for the direction of Paul Thompson, who provided needed advice on the whole manuscript, and to Bryan Norton and Baird Callicott for help on particular chapters. I received essential encouragement from friends including Philip Bobbitt, Peter Jutro, and Clifford Russell. Terry Moore, who at Cambridge edited the first edition of this book, initiated the second. Like many others, I miss him; I am also grateful to Beatrice Rehl for taking up his work.

The National Science Foundation, especially the Ethics and Values Studies program, headed by Rachele Hollander, over the years has supported my research. Working within a tiny budget, Dr. Hollander has helped to create the field of ethical analysis of science and technology; she is in large measure responsible for its development. All of us who work in this interdisciplinary area know how important her energetic advice and guidance have been; the Ethics and Values Studies program exemplifies the very best way the government may support scholarship. I should also like gratefully to acknowledge additional support I have received from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Maryland Sea Grant Program, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institutes of Health (program in the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of the Human Genome Project), and the Pew Charitable Trusts. The views expressed in the book are those of the author only, however, not necessarily those of any other person or any agency.

I wish to thank my wife, Kendra, and children, Jared and Amelia, for giving me the energy I needed to complete this book. They provide the reason and the reward for writing; they teach me “not from the positions of philosophers but from the fabric of nature.”

In writing this book I have borrowed, built on, revised, or otherwise worked from several essays published previously. A shorter version of Chapter 1 appeared in *Philosophy & Public Policy Quarterly* 27 (Winter/Spring 2007): 2–7. Chapter 2 borrows from the *Arizona Law Review* 23 (1981): 1281–1298; Chapter 3 draws upon “We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us or Conflict and Contradiction in Environmental Law,” *Environmental Law* 12 (1982): 283–315; Chapter 4 takes passages from an article that appeared in *Ethics* 96 (1986): 301–316 and includes material from “An Aggregate Measure of What? A Reply to Zerby, Bauman, and Finkle,” *Ecological Economics* 60 (1) (November 2006): 9–13; Chapter 5 draws largely on two publications: “On the Economic Value of Nature’s Services,” *Environmental Values* 17 (1) (February 2008); and “Locke Was Right: Nature Has Little Economic Value,” *Philosophy*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-86755-9 - The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment,
Second Edition

Mark Sagoff

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

and Public Policy Quarterly 25 (3) (Summer 2005): 2–11. Chapter 6 revises “Do We Consume Too Much?” *The Atlantic Monthly* 279 (6) (June 1997): 80–96; an earlier version of Chapter 7 appeared as “On the Compatibility of a Conservation Ethic with Biological Science,” *Conservation Biology* 21 (2) (April 2007): 337–345; Chapter 8 relies on material that appeared in “On Preserving the Natural Environment,” *Yale Law Journal* 84 (1974): 205–267; and Chapter 9 contains material from “Settling America or The Concept of Place in Environmental Ethics,” *Journal of Energy, Natural Resources & Environmental Law* 12 (2) (1992): 351–418. A short version of Chapter 10 appeared in *Philosophy & Public Policy Quarterly* 27 (Summer/Fall 2007): 2–9. I am grateful to the editors of these journals for permission to build on these essays.